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Ashridge, which overlooks the beech county, Buckinghamshire, and Lord Rothschild's park at Tring, but is itself on the opposite chalk range, in the borders of Hertfordshire. It is known as *THE QUEEN'S BEech*, and is calculated to be 150ft. high. It is remarkable not only for its height, but for its perfect shape. The stem rises 100ft. without a single branch, and in the form of a perfect cylinder, growing very gradually less towards the top. Other beeches close by reach an equal height, but have not such perfect and symmetrical trunks. One of the finest "all round" beech trees in Scotland is at Newbattle Abbey in Midlothian. It is 95ft. high, and 37½ft. in girth 1ft. from the ground. The branches spread over a circuit of 350ft.

The uses of beech, whether for fuel, food, or timber, are manifold, and in some ways peculiar. Beech leaves make a fragrant, soft, and wholesome mattress. They never decay if kept dry, and have some antiseptic substance in them which prevents any vermin of the leaf-eating kind from harbouring in them. The charcoal burners of the New Forest sleep on sacks of beech leaves, and are as comfortable as need be. The oil of beech nuts is pure and good, quite as serviceable for cooking as salad oil. Then the nuts, as everyone knows, are the best of food for pigs and pigeons, and the wood makes the most beautiful fire in the world. Perhaps that is why it is the favourite wood for charcoal. But it is a pity to burn it otherwise than in the natural state. I have often noticed the beautifully clear, glowing



J. T. Newman.

A WOODLAND GLADE.

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fires which the gipsies make: they will burn half the night like those of good coal. These fires are always made of beech sticks when procurable.

The wood is particularly useful for any work which has to stand the effect of water. Nearly all the wheels of the water-mills were made of beech, as well as the plates of weirs, the posts of locks, and cam-shedding. In houses it is far less durable than oak, and is not much used for that reason. Yet it makes good and durable furniture, and is still in great demand for that purpose.

C. J. CORNELL.

Winter Travelling in the Klondyke.

"We are out once more on the old trail, the long trail."

Klitting.

PERHAPS in the years to come travellers in the Yukon district, who are whiling to Dawson by the Arctic Limited Express, will recall the stories of the long 600-mile tramp behind dog sleighs over the ice, and there will be built around the memory of those days a halo of romance such as lingers still with the old coaching times; or the Lochinvar of a historical novel of the twenty-first century may distance all pursuit—with his lady love wrapped in furs on the sleigh before him—owing to the fleetness of his incomparable dog team and his own marvellous powers of endurance.

In the stern reality of the journey romance seems out of the question, nor will the word even associate with the unspeakable discomfort of some of the road-houses on the trail. It is easier to imagine such a possibility as is suggested a few years ago, when those who made the winter trip could be contented on the fingers of two hands and road-houses were unknown.

The last good-byes have been said, the last letter for the outside handed to you, and you are jogging along behind the dog sleigh over the hard, well-bitten trail, to the accompaniment of the jingling sleigh bells, while the noisy farewells of your friends follow you through the clear, still air. Your dog team have been in hard work and are fit for the journey.

Having crossed the river, you turn and take a last look at Dawson, that "City of Dreadful Night"—what merry, mad revels have these long nights seen! Looking up the Klondyke river, a blue haze covers the valley, the smoke of the night-fires from the golden ground beyond, and Dawson, just awaking from sleep, is sending skyward its thousand wreaths of white smoke, which rise far into the still morning air before they spread and drift imperceptibly across the river.

The trail is excellent, you think, for its marble hardness has not yet told on sinew and foot sole, and the day promises to be one on which it is good to be alive; there is a blue, indescribably clear sky, not a breath of wind, and the thermometer 25deg. below zero. The hills to the east have become bathed in a generous, ruddy light, and presently the sun itself appears low over the hilltops, brilliant, but very dazzling to the eyes off the white snow.

At four o'clock you pull into a road house, stiff, a trifle footsore, and eager for a meal and a bed—you are travelling



A KLONDYKER HAULING WOOD TO DAWSON.

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luxuriously, and buy your meals as you go instead of taking food and cooking yourself. After a fairly satisfactory supper, you are shown into another cabin, the bunk-house, 18ft. by 20ft. Ten men are trying to cook their meal on a camp stove: around three sides of the cabin are bunks (with poles for "mattress"), two tiers high, and the room is thick with tobacco smoke, burning bacon, and reeking dog-feed.

You finally get a chance to boil some water and mix your own dog-feed, though not without considerable difficulty, and a stern insistence on the rights of your "turn," for more travellers have arrived, and are clamorous for the use of the stove. At last you roll in your blanket on the pole "mattress," and try to forget your sore, smoke-irritated eyes in sleep, but belated travellers still arrive, and the little camp stove is kept red-hot till nearly midnight, and the cabin is at a temperature at which sleep is out of the question. An endless discussion goes on as to distances between various road-houses—how tired you will get of hearing this debated—and in one corner there is a heated argument between three men as to the relative merits of the dogs Royal and Siwash as leaders. The reeking tobacco smoke, the noisy exclamations and oaths of the last arrivals, the dust and bark which is shaken down on your face by a fellow-sufferer turning over in the bunk above you—all these combine to make you rise and go outside, swearing yourself a fool not to be camped in a thicket of pine trees, your roof the sky, ablaze with those brilliant, winking thousands of stars, and the swiftly moving mystery of the Northern Lights. It is cold, deadly cold though, and you cannot stay out long, unprepared as you are; as your hand is on the door to re-enter, a crackling report, followed by a muffled boom, tells you the mighty frost-king has fired his minute gun, and riven a long seam far out in the ice on the silent, motionless river. Returning to your bunk, you get a few hours' troubled sleep, and at 4 a.m. are

ice. The road-house to-night, however, is better, and a good night's sleep is worth a bank-note. The next day and the next are monotonously the same, only the food gets from bad to worse, till pork and beans are eaten off the same tin plate as bread and treacle; but your stiffness begins to wear off, your soreness to leave you, till you feel by the time you arrive in Fort Selkirk, 200 miles from Dawson, you can look forward with equanimity to whatever the 400 miles still before you may have in store. The little hotel at Fort Selkirk—my blessing on the hospitable

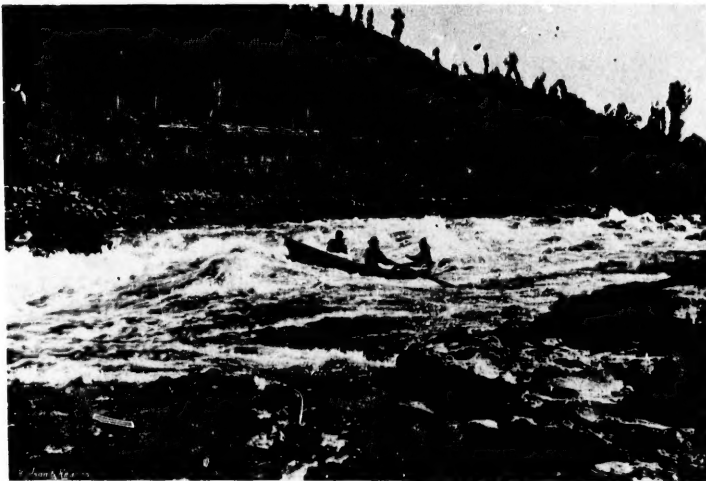


HUSKIES OF YUKON.

manager—is called the Savoy, and is to other road-houses you have been sleeping in even as its princely namesake on the banks of the Thames is to a country public-house. You astonish yourself—though not the excellent woman who ministers to your wants, for she has seen many such as you—by the largeness of your appetite, for do you not get soup, fish, meat, and pudding on separate hot and immaculately clean plates?—"a four-plate racket" I heard a Westerner describe the meal as—and presently you retire to sleep in a clean bed, on a clean spring mattress, and dream you are spending some of the millions—alas! dream millions only—you have made in the Klondyke within the luxurious walls of the other Savoy on the Thames Embankment.

The next day you push on, and meet, for a change, a howling wind and drifting snow, which stings the face like sand. The dogs toil on gallantly, but the drifted trail is heavy against the wind-storm, and you meet and look back enviously on three dog teams and six men who are blown past you into the dim mist of snow before you can catch your breath to ask "How far?" A short day's travel this one, which annoys you, so strong and tireless do you feel at the end of it. The wind dies down during the night; and next day—after a nightmare road-house, with, even knottier poles than usual to sleep on, with more objectionable fellow-travellers than any you have so far encountered, and dirtier food than ever—you face the long trail again, in a temperature your thermometer tells you is 54 deg. below zero; you therefore scrutinise each passing traveller, and stop perhaps and enquire if your own face is "touched" with frost. The sun has not much power yet against such intense

cold, and it seems as if the father of light, knowing this, tries to add to his strength, for three brilliant sun-dogs, small suns themselves, surround their parent. You know them to be the aftermath of the storm yesterday, but it is explained in a road-house that night that the sun-dogs "cause the cold," and the gentleman who makes this astonishing assertion snorts at your "jest," and enquires how long you have been in the Yukon. "My first winter," you respond, weakly. "Huh!" he retorts, "an' you thinks you know better'n me about cold weather, eh? An' I've



WHITE HORSE RAPIDS.

awakened by the smoke and smell of burning bacon being cooked—God save the mark!—by one of the early risers. You count heads before leaving this bunk-house, and find there were twenty-four who passed, it is to be hoped, a better night than you did within its dirty walls.

The next day's travel is torture; you are stiff, sore as though you had ridden a pulling horse over a big country after being out of the saddle a year, and the soles of your feet swell and burn as though the walking was on hot lava rather than

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bin in fifteen years!" "But the scientific —" you begin, gently. "Scientific be damned," he shouts. "Lots of them chaps aint never seen the thermometer below zero! Wot do they know of sun-dogs?" "You return to your pole 'mattress' without reply: you are too tired to give an elementary lecture on refraction."

Day after day you plod along, ever to the southward, and each day the sun is longer in the heavens, and warmer on your face. Sometimes the ice-road winds between bold, high banks, whose rocky scarp run down to the ice edge, sometimes between thickly wooded islands, where the sombre pine trees throw their shadows far across the trail. Lake LeBarge is behind you now, and also the grim cañon and White Horse Rapids, where many a bold miner has found a grave in the rushing waters. You make in a day the sixty miles from Lake Tagish to the head of Lake Bennett, and wonder if you are the same foot-sore, stiff, and weary traveller who plodded along suffering in silence and misery sixteen days ago.

Your face is burnt a dark, rich brown, your feet are hard and tireless, you can sleep on a pile of firewood as soundly as on a spring mattress, you feel fit to run, jump, or fight for your life, and when next morning you top the summit of the coast range, bidding farewell for a while to the Union Jack floating there, and turn your face to the magnificent panorama spread below you, you know once more the *pie de vivre* you thought to be gone for ever with your schoolboy days, and you shout in the ecstasy of health which is found after toil and labour done in the keen bracing air on the long winter trail of the Yukon river.

HENRY TOKE MUNN.

ON THE GREEN.

HARRY VARDON continues to tour America triumphantly, a tour that would be more interesting if the triumphs were not so uninterrupted. The professionals seem more consistent in their play than the amateurs. When a man in their class has climbed to the top of the tree he not only stays there for a year or two—*vide* Taylor and Vardon—but while there he seems as if he were there of right, and beats any that comes to challenge him. Of course,

this is more true of Vardon than of any other golfer that ever handled a club; but as compared with the amateur golf it is characteristic of the golf of the professional class. Just at the moment in the amateur ranks we are being threatened with a real revolution of the younger element. We have seen it surging for awhile back, now it is breaking the surface, and it only remains to see whether it will go to the height of winning the championship of the amateurs. That is a matter that still lies on the knees of the gods; but there are several instances of the revolt of the juveniles that are historical, although recent. Mr. Braunsford's beatings of Mr. Hutchinson, Mr. Hilton, and Mr. J. L. Low success fully are rampant cases at Newmarket Hills. At Morfield Mr. E. M. Hunt, seen in a field that included two amateur champions, Mr. J. E. Landis and Mr. Ralston Melville; and another of the younger division, Mr. C. E. Delrieu, was second to Mr. Hunter. Again, there was Mr. R. Maxwell winning at North Berwick in the Tarradale Club's competition, and winning by an immense balance, with Mr. J. E. Landis again far behind; and at Hoylake Mr. J. Graham took the first of his medals by ever so many strokes from Mr. Hilton and Mr. Hutchinson, who tied for second place. Here there are other cases of the same revolutionary upheaval? Probably, but for the moment we forget them. Enough has been said to show that we are on the eve of a general upsetting of the ancient apple cart, even if that antique vehicle is not already tottering with the dry rot. Still, these older players have a way of reassuring themselves, of "holding up" again in what has been called the Indian summer of their game. They are not likely to allow themselves to be fowlsied, nearly tickled, and laid on the shelf as specimens of what was good in a bygone age, without some effort.

It is said by people who visit a good many golf clubs that the lists for the Tait Memorial Fund are not filling up according to hope and anticipation. Of course, the general fact of the drain on people's pockets owing to the war and so on are to be kept in remembrance; but is it not likely to be the case in regard to this particular subscription list that a good many of the men whose names might have been looked for on a certain list are absent because they appear on some other list? Most men are members of several clubs. The lists are put up in all; but the subscriber only writes down his name on one, and hence the many blank spaces. That is our suggestion by way of explanation, but we must also admit that we have always thought these lists would have filled far quicker had the object to which the money would be appropriated been named at first.

They have set the record for the competition score at Hoylake at a mighty low level now, Mr. Hilton, on the second metal day, getting round in the wonderfully low score of 72, where actually was a six at the last hole after he had reached the green comfortably in two, a potential 70. It is a score to make one marvel, only to be made by perfect play with all that kind fortune can do to aid it helping.

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AT THE THEATRE

M^R. R. C. CAR^TON has achieved another success. All his successes are those of merit, in their several ways. Of late, this, one of our most able and charming writers, has been pessimistic and decadent in his themes, but in "Lady Hunt-

worth's Experiment," at the Criterion Theatre, without going back to the idealism of "Liberty Hall" and "Sunlight and Shadow," he once again expresses his belief in human nature in a play in which there is nothing to hurt, or nothing which hurts. It is a triumphant vindication of the attitude of those who hold that it is possible to amuse and interest an audience of adults without hampering the theatre to adolescence.

When a writer can give us so pleasant and wholesome a play as this, and can give it the treatment of charm, of literature, of character which Mr. Carton can always give, success is certain. Certain, though the "plot" is "thin." Plays with plots must always be the very best things for the theatre, but, when one gets a comedy of character so admirably told, so unremittably interesting, we may fervently welcome it. The groundwork of "Lady Huntworth's Experiment" is fantastic, not too convincing—theatrical, if you will. But though the situation in which the people of the drama are placed is all these, the characters themselves are human and true to life. So we regard the play through them, and the result is very pleasing indeed.

Lady Huntworth has allowed herself to be divorced by her husband, has not defended the suit, because she preferred to bear the stigma rather than continue the wife of a horrible drunkard, who has spent her fortune and ruined her life. Penniless, under an assumed name, she becomes the cook of a country vicarage,

Everyone falls in love with her—the choleric old vicar, the horsey, good-hearted military man, the butler. All on one night they make their way into her kitchen. On the same evening her wretched ex-husband returns with an offer of remarriage, very kindly promising to "forget and forgive." He has heard that she is the heiress to another fortune. For a little while the comedy borders on farce, for each of the men has to be hidden in a room or cupboard; but Mr. Carton's skill enables him to avoid the pitfalls of such an embroglio, and he carries his piece triumphantly to a close.

The play is very admirably interpreted. Miss Compton, as the aristocratic cook, acts with her accustomed urbanity and cool, highly-bred manner; but, as usual, she manages to suggest a good deal of feeling, nevertheless. Mr. Eric Lewis provides another of his little gems of character study as the vicar, Mr. Arthur Boucherier with another of his rough, breezy, pleasant gentlemen of the Army. Mr. Ernest Hendrie's drily humorous style obtains an excellent outlet as the butler; Miss Pollie Emery makes one of the successes of the evening as a typical "slavey." Miss Gertrude Elliott, in too small a part, is as charming and winsome as ever. Mr. Dion Boucicault gives a gruesome and ugly, but very striking and clever, performance of the character of the villainous Huntworth; the author must share with the actor the blame for laying on the colour too thickly for a play of such delicate texture.

"M^ARSAC OF GASCONY" is romantic costume drama run mad. A burlesque of "The Three Musketeers" fashion could hardly further go. Mr. Edward Vroom's play, produced at Drury Lane Theatre, is a met-

